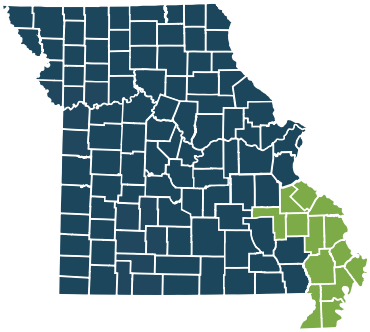


COMMUTING PROFILE
SOUTHEAST REGION
JULY 2026

Overview

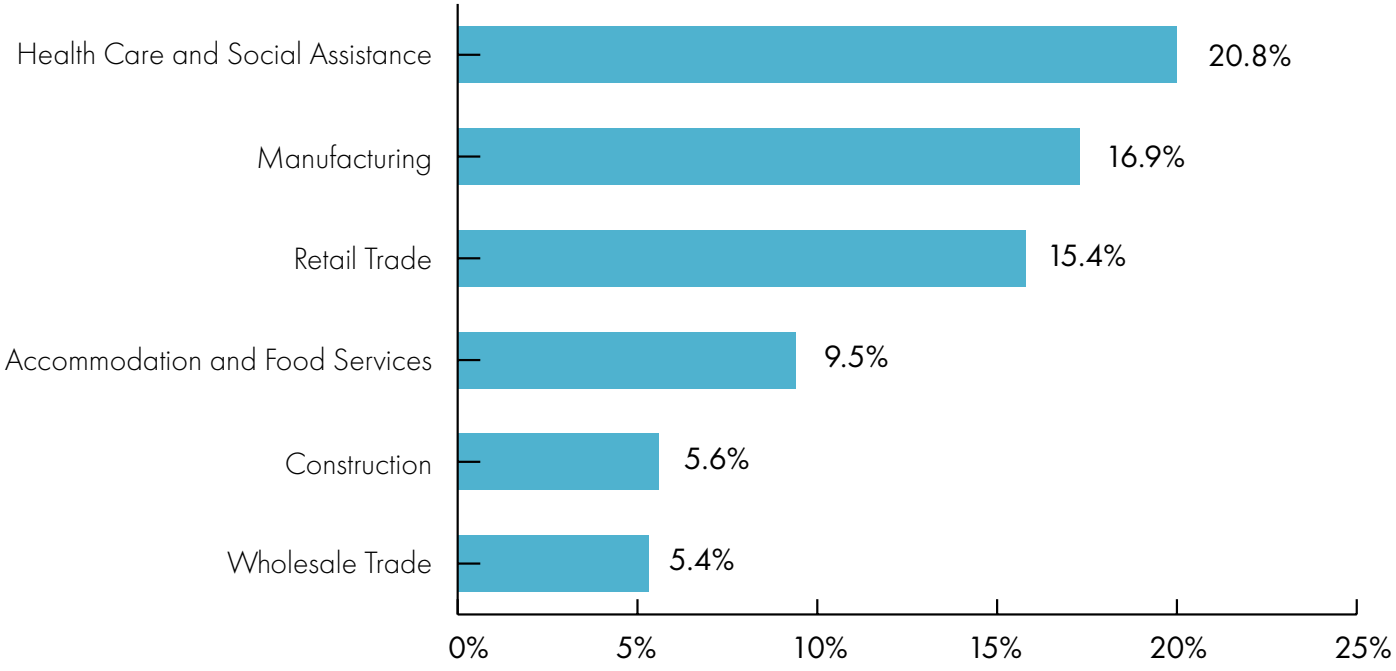
The Southeast Workforce Development Area (WDA) consists of 13 counties: Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Dunklin, Iron, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Scott, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve, and Stoddard. The region is home to Dexter, Perryville, Jackson, Sikeston, and Cape Girardeau, which is the largest city in the Southeast Region. In 2023, there were 103,466 total private primary jobs** in the Southeast WDA, making up 4.5 percent of private primary jobs in Missouri. Nearly half (49.4%) of the workers employed in the region were aged 30 to 54. Workers aged 29 or younger were 26.7 percent of the workforce and those 55 or older were 24 percent. In 2023, 44.7 percent of private primary jobs in the Southeast WDA paid more than $3,333 per month. Of the remaining jobs, 18.7 percent paid $1,250 per month or less and 36.6 percent paid between $1,251 and $3,333 per month. In 2023, there were more men (51.6%) than women (48.4%) in the Southeast WDA workforce employed at the private primary jobs.

In 2023, 27.5 percent of employees living in the Southeast WDA commuted more than 50 miles to work, 14.9 percent of workers traveled 25 to 50 miles to work, 21 percent commuted 10 to 24 miles, and 36.6 percent commuted fewer than 10 miles to work.

Industry

Health Care and Social Assistance was the largest employing industry in the region with 21,532 jobs (20.8% of total private primary jobs in the region). *Manufacturing; Retail Trade; Accommodation and Food Services; Construction*; and *Wholesale Trade* were other major industry sectors having at least 5 percent of the region's employment share. Cape Girardeau, Sikeston, Jackson, Farmington, Perryville, Dexter, and Kennett were the top cities for employment in the Southeast WDA.

Top Southeast WDA Industry - Private Primary Jobs Percentage



Where the Southeast WDA Labor Force Works and Lives

Of the 103,466 workers employed in the Southeast WDA in 2023, 76.4 percent commuted to work from within the region. The remainder (23.6%) commuted into the Southeast WDA from homes outside of the region.

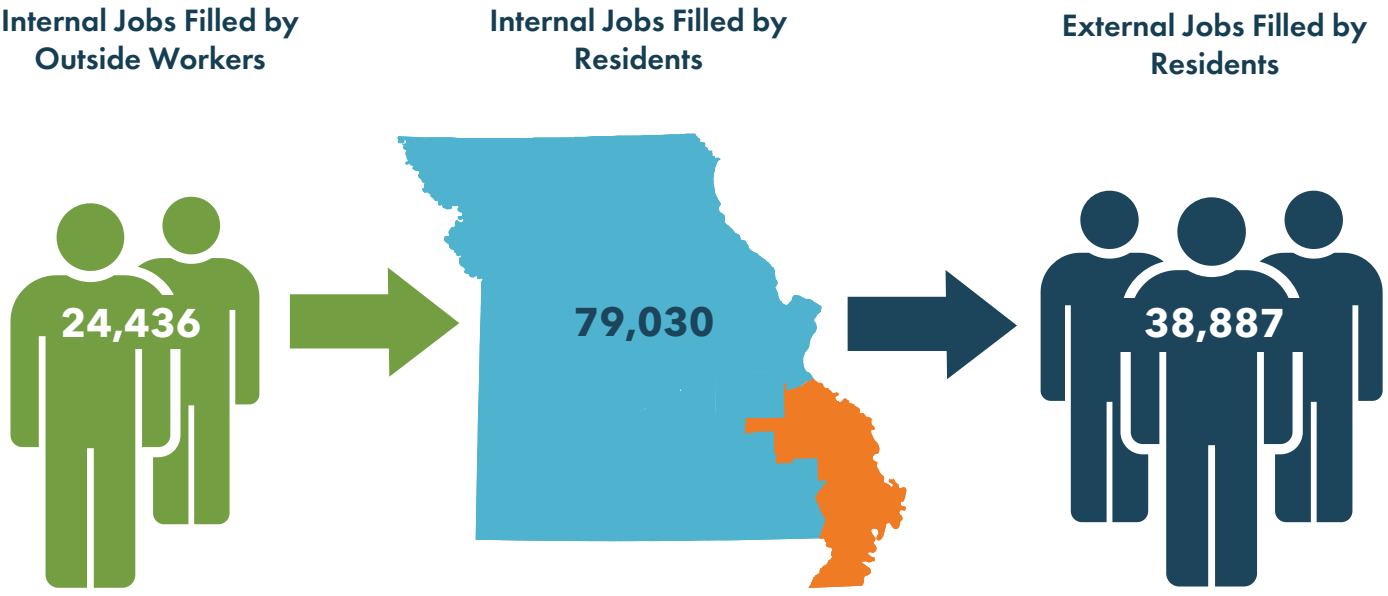
Description	2023	
	Count	Share
Southeast WDA Labor Market Size (Private Primary Jobs)		
Employed in the Southeast WDA	103,466	100.0%
Living in the Southeast WDA	117,917	114.0%
Net Job Inflow (+) or Outflow (-)	-14,451	-
In-Area Labor Force Efficiency (Private Primary Jobs)		
Living in the Southeast WDA	117,917	100.0%
Living and Employed in the Southeast WDA	79,030	67.0%
Living in the Southeast WDA but Employed Outside	38,887	33.0%
In-Area Employment Efficiency (Private Primary Jobs)		
Employed in the Southeast WDA	103,466	100.0%
Employed and Living in the Southeast WDA	79,030	76.4%
Employed in the Southeast WDA but Living Outside	24,436	23.6%

Of the region's residents who are in the workforce, 33.0 percent, or 38,887, commuted to jobs outside of the region. The Southeast WDA attracted 24,436 workers from outside of the region. More than 79,000 Southeast WDA residents lived and worked in the region.

The top Missouri counties where Southeast WDA workers resided (in descending order) were Cape Girardeau, Scott, St. Francois, Stoddard, and Perry. These counties were home to over 52 percent of the region's workforce.

Inflow/Outflow

Overall, 117,917 employees lived in the Southeast WDA and 103,466 workers were employed in the region, resulting in a net outflow of 14,451 workers from the region.



The following table shows the worker composition for the job inflow and outflow groups as well as worker characteristics of the interior job flow. Of the 79,030 individuals who lived and worked in the region, 26.4 percent were aged 29 years or younger, 49.4 percent were aged 30 to 54 years, and 24.1 percent were aged 55 years or older. Almost half (48.9) worked in the *Services* industry.

Southeast WDA Description	2023	
	Count	Share
Outflow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
External Jobs Filled by Residents	38,887	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	10,841	27.9%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	19,714	50.7%
Workers Aged 55 or older	8,332	21.4%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	6,282	16.2%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	12,564	32.3%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	20,041	51.5%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	8,463	21.8%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	12,036	31.0%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	18,388	47.3%
Inflow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
Internal Jobs Filled by Outside Workers	24,436	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	6,696	27.4%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	12,014	49.2%
Workers Aged 55 or older	5,726	23.4%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	4,809	19.7%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	8,344	34.1%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	11,283	46.2%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	5,024	20.6%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	7,889	32.3%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	11,523	47.2%
Interior Flow Job Characteristics (Private Primary Jobs)		
Internal Jobs Filled by Residents	79,030	100.0%
Workers Aged 29 or younger	20,903	26.4%
Workers Aged 30 to 54	39,068	49.4%
Workers Aged 55 or older	19,059	24.1%
Workers Earning $1,250 per month or less	14,541	18.4%
Workers Earning $1,251 to $3,333 per month	29,555	37.4%
Workers Earning More than $3,333 per month	34,934	44.2%
Workers in the "Goods Producing" Industry Class	21,207	26.8%
Workers in the "Trade, Transportation, and Utilities" Industry Class	19,196	24.3%
Workers in the "All Other Services" Industry Class	38,627	48.9%

Commuter Pattern

The top five counties where Southeast WDA workers living in the region are employed at their private primary jobs (in descending order) were Cape Girardeau, St. Francois, Scott, St. Louis County, and Stoddard.

The table below indicates that many resident workers commuted to another county for employment. All but Cape Girardeau County had at least half of their residents commuting outside their county of residence for work. Larger cities, such as Cape Girardeau, Sikeston, and Perryville, attracted workers from the surrounding counties. The counties containing these cities also had a lower percentage of workers who left the county to find work. The Southeast location in the state with Interstate 55 access improves the ability of Southeast Region residents to commute to their workplaces.

Southeast WDA	
Percent of Southeast WDA Residents Working Outside of Home County	
Bollinger	**84%**
Cape Girardeau	**42%**
Dunklin	**66%**
Iron	**73%**
Madison	**69%**
Mississippi	**71%**
New Madrid	**67%**
Pemiscot	**68%**
Perry	**50%**
Scott	**62%**
St. Francois	**61%**
Ste. Genevieve	**66%**
Stoddard	**57%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2023*), URL: https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/

**2023 is the latest year for which LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (commuting data) is available from the U.S. Census Bureau. To maintain the consistency of data in this report, all relevant data used is also from 2023, although later data for some data points was available.*

LEHD data infrastructure tracks jobs as its primary unit instead of people. As such, the system naturally captures more than one job per person when available in the data. The **dominant (or primary) job for an individual is defined as the job that earned the individual the most money. Constructed this way, ***the number of primary jobs should be equal to the number of workers.***

This report was prepared by the staff of the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC). All data in this report was current at the time of publication and is subject to revision. This workforce product was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The product was created by the recipient and does not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Department of Labor. The U.S. Department of Labor makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to such information, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by the institution that created it. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for non-commercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.